

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L LUSAKA 2426

EXDIS HANDLE AS NODIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PDEV RH US UK
SUBJ: RHODESIA: WHAT NKOMO MAY HAVE IN MIND

1. WHILE THE FOLLOWING IS ADMITTEDLY SPECULATIVE, IT IS
THE MOST PLAUSIBLE EXPLANATION I CAN PUT TOGETHER OF WHAT
IS NOW HAPPENING IN THE RHODESIA NEGOTIATIONS AND RELATION-
SHIPS BETWEEN THE NATIONALIST PARTIES.

2. WHEN KNOWLEDGE OF SMITH'S SECRET VISIT TO LUSAKA BECAME
PUBLIC AT THE END OF SEPTEMBER, THE PATRIOTIC FRONT WAS ON
THE VERGE OF A UNITY CONFERENCE AT WHICH ZANU AND ZAPU WERE TO
BE MERGED INTO A SINGLE POLITICAL ORGANIZATION. THE LEAK AND
SUBSEQUENT SUSPICION THAT THE VISIT WAS RELATED TO A KAUNDA-
SMITH DEAL TO INSTALL NKOMO LED TO A SPLIT BETWEEN MUGABE AND
NKOMO AND DESTROYED THE UNITY ATTEMPT.

3. JOSHUA NKOMO AND ZAPU HAVE ALWAYS CONTENDED THAT BEFORE
THERE CAN BE CLOSE MILITARY COOPERATION BETWEEN THE FORCES
OF THE TWO COMPONENT PARTS OF THE PF THERE MUST BE POLITICAL
UNITY. ZANU ON THE OTHER HAND HAS ARGUED THAT THERE SHOULD
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BE UNIFICATION OF THE ARMIES FIRST. HAMADZIRIPI AND HIS GROUP
WERE DETAINED IN MOZAMBIQUE IN DECEMBER AND THE FOLLOWING
MONTHS ON THE ACCUSATION OF COOPERATION WITH NKOMO AND ZAPU IN
THE UNITY EFFORT AND THREATENING MUGABE'S LEADERSHIP OF ZANU.

4. I BELIEVE THAT JOSHUA NKOMO MAY NOW BE ENGAGED IN AN EFFORT
TO RECONSTITUTE PATRIOTIC FRONT UNITY, IF POSSIBLE INCLUDING

MUGABE AND TONGAGARA BUT IF NECESSARY WITHOUT THEM. IN THIS HE IS PROBABLY SEEKING SUPPORT FROM NETO, MACHEL AND KAUNDA. HAMADZIRIPI AND HIS GROUP'S "ESCAPE" FROM DETENTION IN MOZAMBIQUE PROVIDES THE OPPORTUNITY TO PROCEED AND I NOTE REPORTS OF A SECRET EMERGENCY FRONTLINE SUMMIT IN THE NEXT FEW DAYS.

5. NKOMO WOULD USE HIS FRONTLINE SUPPORT AND THE HAMADZIRIPI GROUP AS LEVERAGE TO GET MUGABE AND TONGAGARA TO AGREE TO THE POLITICAL UNIFICATION WITH NKOMO IN CHARGE. THE RECENT DEATH OF ZIPRA'S COMMANDING OFFICER NIKITA MANGENA PROVIDES NKOMO WITH ANOTHER CARD TO PLAY IN OFFERING TONGAGARA THE TOP MILITARY POSITION.

6. WE HAVE NO WAY OF KNOWING HOW MUCH INFLUENCE HAMADZIRIPI AND HIS GROUP CAN STILL CLAIM AMONG THE ACTUAL ZANLA FIGHTERS NOR HOW MUCH PRESSURE MACHEL IS WILLING TO PLACE ON MUGABE. IT MAY THEREFORE BE THAT NKOMO WILL NOT SUCCEED IN PERSUADING MUGABE TO ACCEPT UNITY AND A SUBSIDIARY POSITION FOR HIMSELF. ANOTHER POSSIBLE HITCH COULD DEVELOP IF A SIGNIFICANT PART OF THE HAMADZIRIPI GROUP OPTED FOR SITHOLE AND THE INTERNAL SETTLEMENT.

7. IF NKOMO SUCCEEDS HOWEVER, HE WOULD BE IN A STRONG POSITION TO GO TO SMITH AND TRY TO PUT TOGETHER SOME KIND OF AN ALTERNATE SOLUTION TO THE INTERNAL SETTLEMENT. IF SMITH COMPLAINS THAT HE

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CANNOT ACCEPT MUGABE, NKOMO CAN COUNTER THAT MUGABE IS NOW UNDER HIS CONTROL AND RESPONSIBLE TO HIM; SMITH NEED NOT WORRY ABOUT MUGABE'S ADVOCACY OF A ONE PARTY MARXIST STATE BECAUSE NKOMO DOES NOT ACCEPT IT. NKOMO WOULD SEEK A NEW AGREEMENT WITH SMITH WHICH IMPROVED ON THE MARCH 3 ACCORD. I WOULD GUESS THAT NKOMO WOULD ALSO OFFER POSITIONS TO MUZOREWA AND SITHOLE, AIMING AT A GOVERNMENT OF NATIONAL UNITY AND A POSTPONEMENT OF ELECTIONS FOR A NUMBER OF YEARS, WHICH SMITH HIMSELF PROBABLY WOULD SUPPORT.

8. HOW THIS SCENARIO FITS INTO OUR OWN EFFORTS TOWARDS AN ALL PARTIES MEETING IS NOT CLEAR. I BELIEVE NKOMO WANTS TO RETAIN OUR SUPPORT TO LEGITIMIZE WHAT HE MAY BE ENGAGED IN. HE MAY WANT TO USE THE PROGRESS WE HAVE MADE TOWARDS AN ALL PARTIES MEETING AS A BASIS FOR MEETING SMITH.

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